

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 15, 19, 20, 26, 29, 30 and 43 are pending in this application.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 15, 29 and 43. No new matter has been added.

Claim 43 was rejected under 35 USC 101 because the claimed invention was allegedly directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants thank the Examiner for his suggestion and have amended claim 43 appropriately to overcome this rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 15, 29, 30 and 43 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wiecha U.S. Patent No. 5,870,717 in view of Sharma U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2001/0037259 and Manchala U.S. Patent No. 6,405,178; claims 5, 6, 19 and 20 under 35 USC 103(a) over Wiecha, Sharma, Manchala and Moreno U.S. Patent No. 6,882,269 and claims 12 and 26 under 35 USC 103(a) over Wiecha, Sharma Manchala and Sawada U.S. Patent No. 6,141,507. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections with respect to claims 1, 15, 29 and 43, as amended.

Representative claim 1 has been amended to recite that the method of receiving and handling an order uses an order-reception system that also includes a network-order-reception subsystem. The method also includes receiving, by the order-reception subsystem or by the network-order-reception subsystem, customer order information sent from the customer or sent from a service person using a portable communications device. Claims 15, 29 and 43 were similarly amended. Support for these amendments may be found, for example, in the specification at page 31, line 24 – page 32, line 7, at page 60, lines 1-24 and Figs. 10 and 27.

A similar combination of elements is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, viewed alone or in combination.

For example, Sawada discloses in Fig. 10 a structure in which a serviceman's visit estimator 43 determines whether to send a serviceman based on the results of estimation or diagnosis of the additional information analyzer 42. Sawada's disclosed structure enables more

efficient maintenance operations based on the diagnosis results, and lightens the workload for the serviceman.

On the other hand, according to the specification of the present application (page 31, line 24 – page 32, line 7 and page 60, lines 1-24), when a service person checks the stock of commodities at the time of repair or periodic inspection, the service person has the ability to order commodities running short. Thus, in the claims as amended, not only can customers place orders for products running short, but service people can also do the same. None of the cited references discloses or suggests the same combination of elements that provides this feature.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1, 15, 29 and 43 should be withdrawn. This logic also disposes of the rejections of claims 2, 5, 6, 12, 19, 20, 26 and 30, which depend directly or indirectly from claims 1, 15 and 29.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing Docket No. 116692001000.

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